

DELIVERING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT SCALE IN THE NORTH-WEST OF ENGLAND

SUPPORTING HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS, FRAMEWORK OPERATORS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO DELIVER PREDICTABLE, FABRIC-FIRST SOCIAL HOUSING ACROSS THE NORTH-WEST OF ENGLAND.

DEESIDE TIMBERFRAME



The North-West of England is entering a period of accelerated housing delivery. Across Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region and the wider region, housing associations and public bodies are working to deliver tens of thousands of new affordable and social homes over the coming decade.

At the same time, the environment in which those homes must be delivered has fundamentally changed. The Procurement Act 2023 has reinforced the requirement to evaluate bids on the basis of Most Advantageous Tender. Carbon performance expectations have increased. Labour availability remains constrained. Funding programmes require certainty and accountability.

In this context, construction methodology cannot be viewed as a neutral choice. It is a strategic decision that materially affects risk, programme, quality and long-term performance.

Deeside Timberframe has operated for four decades as a specialist timber frame manufacturer. We are now actively delivering projects across England, supported by our Warrington presence and expanding North-West pipeline. We believe that well-designed, fabric-first timber systems can play a meaningful role in supporting housing associations and framework users to deliver social rent homes at scale — reliably, predictably and with long-term performance in mind.

This paper sets out our perspective on how timber frame can align with the region's delivery objectives and procurement environment. It is intended as a constructive contribution to the ongoing conversation around housing delivery in the North-West.

David Crawford

Managing Director, Deeside Timberframe



NORTH-WEST HOUSING DELIVERY
THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE
Regional Delivery Overview (2026–2030)

Independent framework and programme analysis indicates that between 2026 and 2030 the North-West is expected to deliver in excess of 42,000 to 50,000 new homes, of which approximately 22,000 to 26,000 are anticipated to be social or affordable rent.

The scale of ambition is clear. However, delivery is occurring within an increasingly constrained environment.

Housing associations and public authorities must navigate:

- Continued skills shortages across key trades
- Inflation volatility and cost scrutiny
- Heightened carbon compliance requirements
- Greater emphasis on demonstrable social value
- Increased accountability under Most Advantageous Tender (MAT) evaluation

The result is a delivery landscape in which certainty, repeatability and risk mitigation are becoming as important as headline cost.

PROCUREMENT ACT 2023 AND THE SHIFT TO MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TENDER

The Procurement Act 2023 has formalised a move away from lowest price evaluation towards a broader assessment of value. Most Advantageous Tender (MAT) requires contracting authorities to consider whole-life outcomes, risk mitigation and social value alongside price.

In practical terms, this means that construction methodology is increasingly relevant to procurement scoring.

Evaluation criteria now commonly consider:

- Programme reliability and deliverability
- Quality assurance mechanisms
- Carbon and environmental performance
- Supply chain resilience
- Regional economic contribution

A manufacturing-led timber frame approach directly supports these criteria through controlled production environments, predictable output, improved fabric performance and structured supply chain management.

Where affordable housing delivery involves multiple small and medium-scale sites — as is typical across the North-West — repeatability becomes strategically important. Systems that can be standardised, quality-controlled and reliably programmed reduce cumulative portfolio risk.





WHY 2–3 STOREY SOCIAL RENT HOUSING IS WELL SUITED TO TIMBER FRAME

The majority of social and affordable delivery across the North-West comprises low-rise, 2–3 storey typologies located within suburban allocations, estate regeneration phases and rural exception sites.

These typologies align strongly with engineered timber frame systems.

PROGRAMME CERTAINTY

Timber superstructures are manufactured in controlled factory conditions and delivered to site within defined erection windows. This materially reduces exposure to weather-related delay and variability in early-stage construction.

For schemes in the range of 60 to 100 units, common within current English pipeline projects, compressed superstructure programmes can support improved sequencing and earlier commencement of follow-on trades.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Factory production allows repeatable quality control processes that are difficult to replicate consistently within traditional masonry construction. Improved airtightness performance and thermal continuity are embedded within the structural system, rather than retrofitted on site.

LABOUR EFFICIENCY

Reduced reliance on scarce bricklaying trades mitigates exposure to labour availability constraints. This is increasingly relevant in regional markets where trade capacity remains uneven.

FABRIC-FIRST CARBON PERFORMANCE

Timber frame systems support fabric-first strategies that enhance thermal performance and reduce embodied carbon relative to traditional masonry superstructures. For housing associations seeking balanced and viable Net Zero pathways, this approach provides long-term stability.

ENGLISH DELIVERY CAPABILITY AND REGIONAL ALIGNMENT

Case Study: Magna Rise, North Yorkshire

The 68-home Magna Rise development in East Cowton provides a practical example of how timber frame construction supports the priorities of framework-led affordable housing delivery.

Delivered in partnership with Karbon Homes and Adderstone Living, the scheme forms part of a Homes England-funded strategic programme to increase affordable housing provision across the North East and Yorkshire. The development required careful coordination between infrastructure works, drainage mitigation and phased superstructure erection.

By manufacturing the structural elements offsite in a controlled factory environment, the timber frame solution enabled defined delivery windows aligned with site readiness. This reduced early-stage programme variability and supported milestone-driven funding requirements.

For housing associations operating within formal funding and procurement frameworks, the ability to demonstrate predictable sequencing, quality assurance and fabric-first energy performance is directly aligned with Most Advantageous Tender principles. Magna Rise illustrates how construction methodology can actively contribute to risk mitigation, programme control and long-term asset performance within a framework environment.





A SCALABLE CONTRIBUTION TO NORTH-WEST DELIVERY

The North-West's affordable housing targets require practical, repeatable and risk-managed delivery models. Timber frame is not a universal solution for all typologies, particularly high-density urban towers. However, for the predominant 2–3 storey social rent housing that defines much of the region's pipeline, it provides measurable advantages in programme reliability, quality assurance and carbon performance.

As housing associations and framework operators navigate MAT-driven procurement environments, the selection of construction methodology will increasingly influence evaluation outcomes.

Deeside Timberframe welcomes engagement with housing associations, combined authorities and framework bodies to support scalable and predictable delivery across the North-West.

info@deesietimberframe.com

01569 767 123

DEESIDE TIMBERFRAME